

DATE MAILED

AUG 31 2007

BEFORE THE

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF WISCONSIN

Investigation of Area Code Relief for the 715 Area Code in
Northern Wisconsin

5-TN-100

NOTICE OF INVESTIGATION

Comments Due:

Friday, October 5, 2007 – Noon

FAX Comments Due:

Thursday, October 4, 2007 - NoonThis docket uses the Electronic Regulatory Filing
system (ERF)

Address Comments To:

Sandra J. Paske**Secretary to the Commission**

Public Service Commission

PO Box 7854

Madison, WI 53707-7854

PSC Fax (608) 266-3957

THIS IS AN INVESTIGATION to address the introduction of another area code in the portion of northern Wisconsin currently served by the 715 area code. It is estimated that available telephone numbers in the 715 area code will exhaust in late 2009.¹ To ensure that telephone numbers remain available in this area, action must be taken to introduce a new area code.

The need for a new area code in the 715 area is prompted by the growth of telecommunications competition as well as by the demands for new telecommunications services and telephone numbers. The increasing appearance of new service providers and the growing public use of services such as wireless telephones, pagers, facsimile machines, and modems have consumed additional telephone numbers.

NeuStar, Inc. (NeuStar), in its role as the North American Numbering Plan Administrator, is the current Area Code Administrator for the 715 area. When NeuStar identified the approaching exhaust of available central office codes in the 715 area code, it convened a meeting of the

¹ Telephone numbers within an area code are a finite quantity. Telephone numbers in the United States are composed of a three-digit area code, a three-digit central office code, and a four-digit line number. This numbering format is specified by the North American Numbering Plan. For example, for the telephone number 715-555-9999, the area code is 715, the central office code is 555, and the line code is 9999. Area codes are sometimes called numbering plan area (NPA) codes. Central office codes are also referred to as NXX codes. The 715 area code has 792 assignable central office or NXX codes. Up to 10,000 line numbers can be assigned in an NXX; although when a central office code reaches 80-90 percent of capacity, a new central office code prefix generally is implemented. It is the available central office codes in the 715 area code that will soon be fully used. There are currently fewer than 100 central office codes that remain available for assignment in the 715 area code.

telecommunications industry to examine the viable relief alternatives and the necessary steps to achieve the implementation of a new area code.² That industry team identified two basic alternatives for providing relief in the 715 area code – an overlay or a geographic split. By a letter dated May 9, 2007, NeuStar wrote, on behalf of Wisconsin's telecommunications industry, to advise the Commission that the industry had considered both geographic split and overlay alternatives and that the industry participants reached consensus to recommend an all-services overlay for the 715 area.

The basic options for area code relief in the 715 area (as in other parts of the country) are an overlay or a geographic split.

With an **overlay**,³ the current 715 area code remains the same. All current customers retain their existing telephone numbers, including the 715 area code. With an overlay, another area code is added to the same geographic area of the 715 code.⁴ When all the available numbers (the NXX codes) have been used from the 715 area code, new numbers are assigned using the new area code. This means that customers in the current 715 area, even those located in the same communities or in the same buildings, may have different area codes. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules⁵ for area code assignments specify that when an overlay is implemented, **all** calling within the overlay area must include the area code. Even a call within the same community, from one 715-telephone number to another 715-telephone number, would need to be dialed using the area code. With an overlay, existing customers will not need to make number changes or print new written materials (stationery, business cards, billing forms, etc.); however, customers may need to reprogram certain equipment (e.g., fax machines, alarms, etc.) to accommodate 10-digit dialing. A map of the current 715 area is attached to this notice; with an overlay, a new area code would be used throughout this area.

An overlay plan for area code relief has no impact on the rates for long distance or local calling.

With a **geographic split**, the current 715 area would be divided in two. In one area, there is no area code change and customers keep their current telephone numbers and the 715 area code.

² That original industry meeting took place on June 4, 2002. However, since then, various number conservation efforts were implemented that delayed the need for area code relief until now.

³ The overlay plan would apply to all services, wireline and wireless. This is the all-services overlay referenced in NeuStar's petition. In the past, other parts of the country considered implementing a wireless-only overlay, where only wireless services, such as paging and cellular would be assigned numbers from the new area code. This type of service-specific or technology-targeted overlay was rejected as anti-competitive by the Federal Communications Commission and is not a viable area code relief alternative. The overlay under consideration here is applicable to all services.

⁴ What number the new area code will be, with either an overlay or geographic split, is not currently known. NeuStar will assign that new area code after the Commission adopts a relief plan for 715.

⁵ By federal law, all telephone numbering matters fall within the jurisdiction of the FCC. The FCC has delegated some numbering issues to state commissions, including the determination of how to implement area code relief when new area codes are needed.

In the other area, customers retain their current seven-digit telephone number but they must change their area code from 715 to the new code. This requires these customers to change their stationery, business cards, billing forms, advertising and other printed materials that include a telephone number. A geographic split may, in some locations, divide counties, towns, villages, or even cities between the two area codes. The same is true for some school districts. Where a geographic split line runs between telephone exchanges that currently have local calling, via extended area service (EAS) or extended community calling (ECC), the calling rates do not change; however, it becomes necessary to dial the area code for these local calls. The area code must be used on all calls placed between the two area codes; however, with a geographic split, seven-digit dialing remains viable for local calling within the area code. Although the industry team does not support a geographic split for this area, it examined some split options and identified a preferred boundary line for a split of the 715 area if one is pursued. A map showing the industry's proposed demarcation between the two geographic area code areas is attached to this notice. In examining a geographic split alternative for area code relief, the location of the boundary between the area codes is a matter for the Commission to address, as is which side of the split line will be assigned the new area code. Accordingly, the Commission seeks input on the appropriate location of the split line if a geographic split were to be adopted.

A geographic split plan for area code relief, like an overlay, has no impact on the rates for long distance or local calls.

The introduction of another area code will impact customers and the providers of telephone service no matter what method is used to deploy that new area code, although the manner in which the new area code is introduced will affect customers differently. The Commission intends to approve an area code relief plan to best meet the needs of the public, to assure that numbers are available when needed, to ease the impact on providers and be competitively fair, and to reflect customer concerns.

The Commission is interested in the views of customers, including residential users, businesses and government, as to the benefits or detriments of the two options for providing the new area code. The Commission is also interested in the input of the telecommunications industry on the economic, operational, and competitive implications of the two alternative approaches, and the schedules and implementation steps needed to effectively make the transition to a new area code under either the overlay or split alternative.

NOTICE IS GIVEN that pursuant to 47 C.F.R. § 52.19 and Wis. Stat. §§ 196.02 and 196.37, the Commission will investigate this matter and determine the manner in which another area code will be introduced in the current 715 area.

NOTICE IS GIVEN that the Commission will accept comments on this 715 area code issue. Party comments must be filed using the Electronic Regulatory Filing system (ERF). The ERF system can be accessed through the Public Service Commission's website at <http://psc.wi.gov>. Members of the public may file comments using the ERF system or may file an original in person, by mail, or by fax. For comments in person or by mail, the address is Public Service

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Commission, 610 North Whitney Way, P.O. Box 7854, Madison, Wisconsin 53707-7854. Fax filing cover sheets must state **“Official Filing”** and include the docket number (05-TN-100) and the number of pages (limit of 25 pages). **File by one mode only.**

NOTICE IS GIVEN that the Commission will conduct public hearings to take input from the general public on views and concerns about the geographic split and overlay methods for providing area code relief in the 715 area.

Public hearings are scheduled in communities in the current 715 area as follows:

DATE	TIMES	CITY	LOCATION
September 17, 2007	1:00 p.m..	River Falls	River Falls Public Library Main Level Meeting Room 140 Union Street River Falls, WI 54022
September 17, 2007	7:00 p.m.	Eau Claire	Eau Claire Senior Center Upper Great Room 1616 Bellinger Street Eau Claire, WI 54703
September 18, 2007	1:00 p.m.	Wausau	Wausau City Hall Council Chambers 407 Grant Street Wausau, WI 54403
September 18, 2007	7:00 p.m.	Marinette	Marinette City Hall 1 st Floor Council Chambers 1905 Hall Avenue Marinette, WI 54143
September 19, 2007	1:00 p.m.	Rhineland	Rhineland City Hall Council Chambers 135 S. Stevens Street Rhineland, WI 54501
September 19, 2007	7:00 p.m.	Ashland	Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center Multipurpose Room 29270 County Highway G Ashland, WI 54806

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September 20, 2007	1:00 p.m.	Hayward	Hayward City Hall Council Chambers 15889 W. 3 rd Street Hayward, WI 54803
September 20, 2007	6:30 p.m.	Superior	Superior Public Library Meeting Room 1530 Tower Avenue Superior, WI 54880
September 21, 2007	1:00 p.m.	Medford	Medford Community Center Taylor County Fairgrounds Highway 64 and Highway 13 Medford, WI 54451

These locations are accessible by persons in wheelchairs. The Commission does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the provision of programs, services, or employment. Any person with a disability who needs accommodations to participate in this investigation or who needs to obtain this document in a different format should contact the docket coordinator listed below.

Media questions regarding this matter may be directed to Amanda Wollin at (608) 266-9600. Other questions regarding this matter may be directed to the docket coordinator Kathleen Bakke at (608) 267-9254 or Kathleen.Bakke@psc.state.wi.us.

Dated at Madison, Wisconsin, August 30, 2007

By the Commission:


Sandra J. Paske
Secretary to the Commission

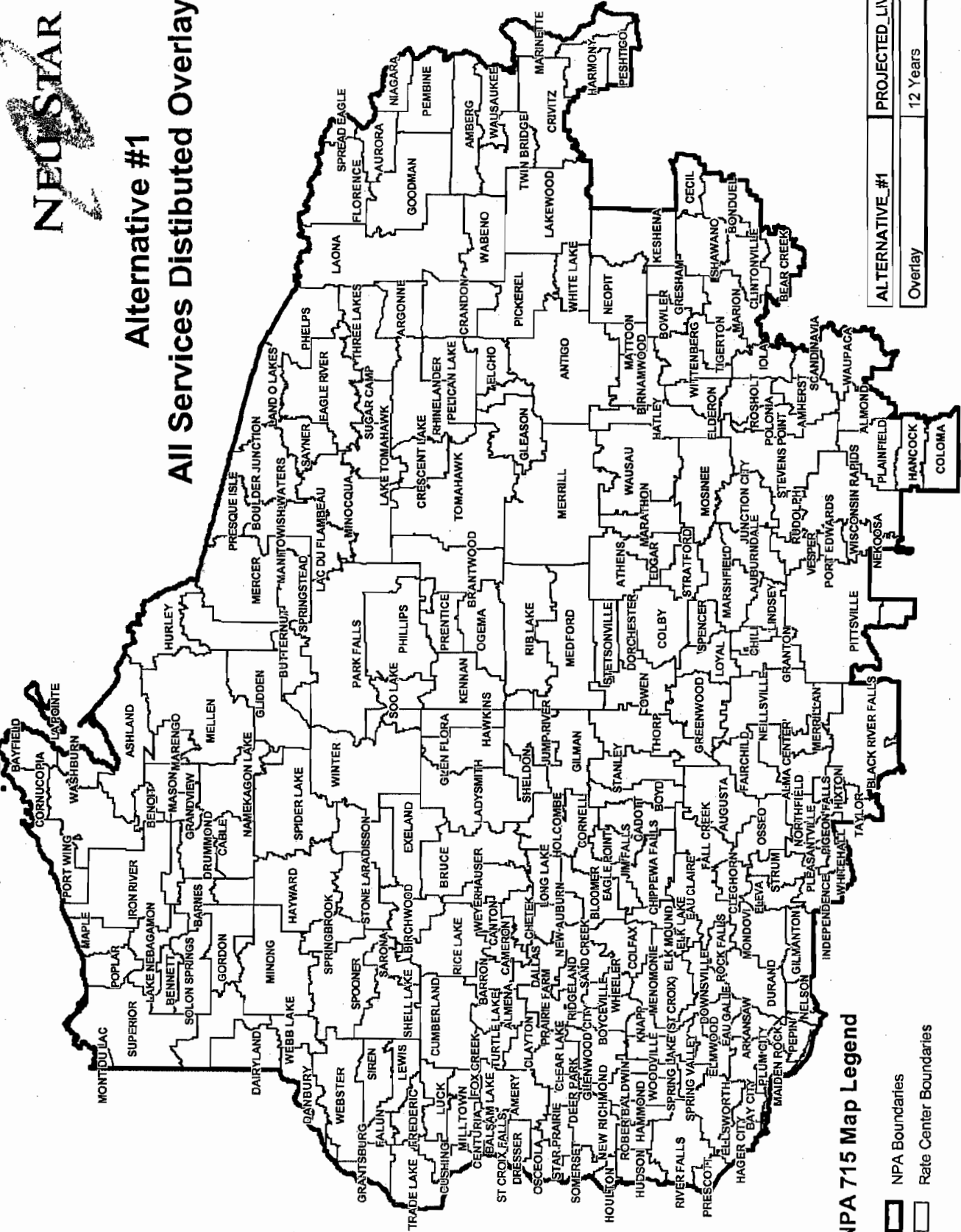
Attachment

SJP:JMD:KLB:klh:cdg:DL:5-TN-100

Wisconsin NPA 715 Rate Center Map



Alternative #1 All Services Distributed Overlay

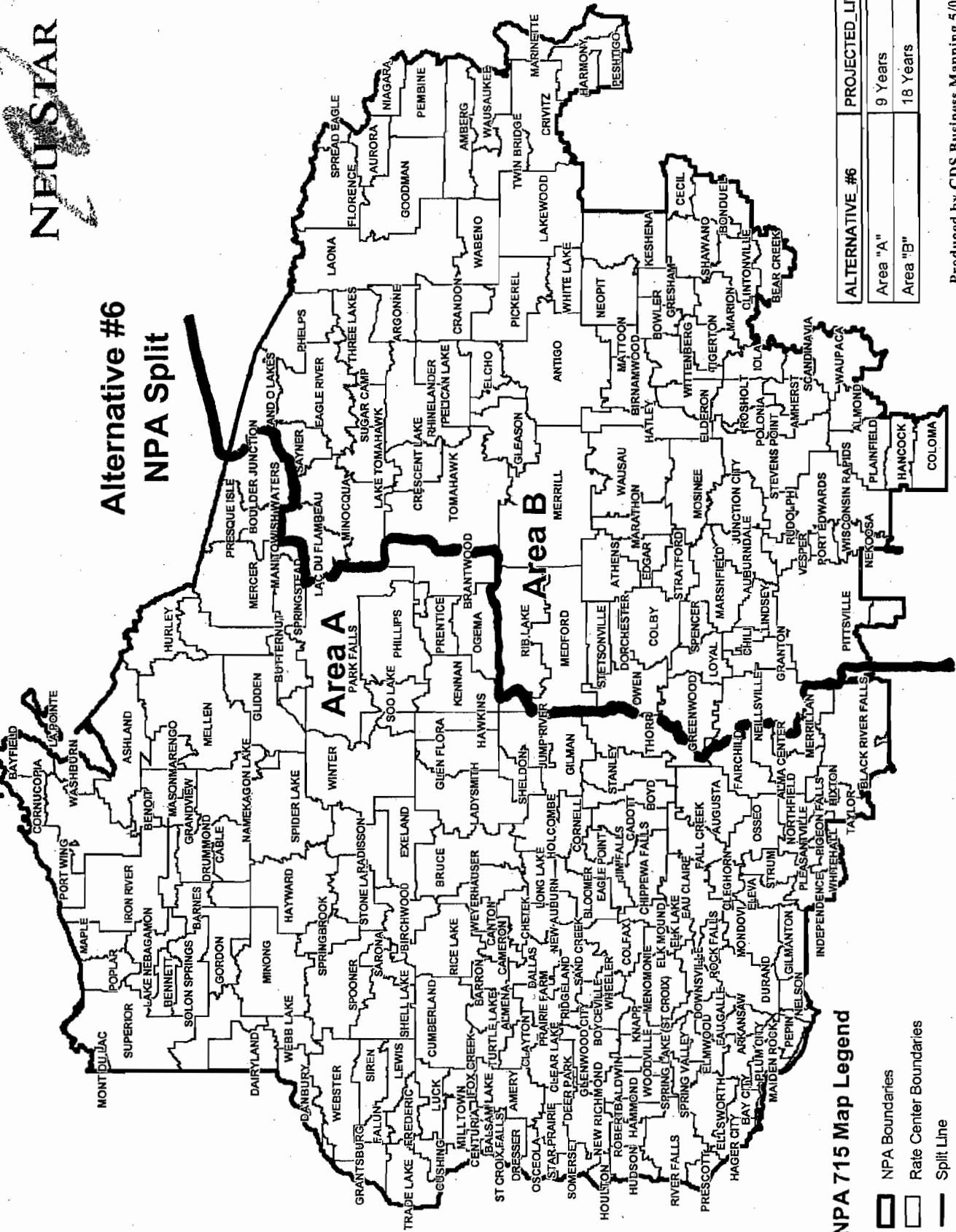


ATTACHMENT B

Produced by CDS Business Mapping 4/04/2002



Alternative #6 NPA Split



NPA 715 Map Legend

- NPA Boundaries
- Rate Center Boundaries
- Split Line

ALTERNATIVE #6	PROJECTED_LIVES
Area "A"	9 Years
Area "B"	18 Years